OPINION

Leadership

Major White, head of the Mid Valley Industrial Park, recently told Carbondaleans, "If you people don't do something (to make the city more attractive to industry) the city is going to die a natural death."

What he said was nothing new. Everybody knows that we have plenty of shortcomings. The sad fact is that hardly anyone is trying to change things.

When the chips are down, the natural tendency is to look to our elected officials to solve our problems for us. "Why doesn't the 'city' do something?" people ask as they complacently sit on the porch chairs.

Morally, Mayor Fred Mancuso has no more obligation to push for the betterment of Carbondale than anyone else. It's every citizen's obligation.

Still, the mayor is in a position to accomplish some things we can't. In the past, Mayor Mancuso has used his authority and knowledge to accomplish some wonderful things for Carbondale, like fighting for federal monies which rebuilt Church Street, Fallbrook Street, and now Dundaff Street. The city is definitely a better place to live than it was a few years ago, and Mayor Mancuso can take credit for a large portion of the improvements. But he still has a lot of work to do!

Despite the recent improvements, Carbondale is still unattractive to industry. A large part of the unattractiveness is the byproduct of an inefficient city administration.

First, the laws aren't being enforced like they should be. A blind man can see the many abuses. Illegal parking, public drinking, hot-rodding on Main St., loitering, right turns on red without stopping, littering, etc., etc.

The police say, "We're shorthanded. We're doing the best with what we have." That's not completely true. Some officers do a good job while others don't. An effective administration would weed out the dead wood.

Building codes and zoning ordinances are not being enforced. There are dozens of structures in town that should be condemned and torn down. Prospective industries see this. Owners should be forced to maintain their properties if that's what it takes to get them fixed up or torn down.

The streets are dirty. Trash overflows from the few containers we have. Street signs are missing. Catchbasins are clogged. Streets still have potholes from last winter.

The list goes on and on.

Nobody expects miracles. But we do expect the people at City Hall to give an honest day's work for a day's pay!

It appears that hasn't been the case lately. The department heads haven't been supervising like they should. The City Manager hasn't been cracking the whip over the department heads. And the mayor hasn't been firm enough with the City Manager.

If our public servants are doing their best, then it's time for a change of personnel because their best simply isn't good enough! The stakes are too high. Carbondale has already lost more than half of its peak population. If we don't reverse the trend, we're all through!

This is where leadership comes into play. Nobody elected Mayor Mancuso to be a nice guy. We elected him to do a job. If heads have to roll to get things done, so be it!

The vast majority of us find it awfully tough to make ends meet financially. The tax dollars that we give to the city are very dear to us. We ought to be getting more for our money!